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ABSTRACT

Accounts of achievements in early childhood care and education in developing countries supplement a discussion of optimal programming. The document begins with background information on problems in educational provision and a rationale for a national focus on early education. Discussion then turns to: (1) parents as prime educators; (2) involvement of the community; (3) program replication; (4) development of partnerships between parents and the community; (5) new ways of working for governments, service agencies, and educators; (6) governmental roles; and (7) community development in action. Supplementary profiles detail benefits of early childhood care and education in Colombia, community involvement in Nigeria, community ownership of schools in Kenya, an early childhood and community project in Arab communities in Israel, Alabama's Federation of Child Care Centers' peer education project on countering negative racial scripting, the Bristol Child Development Project in England and Wales, France's Schools Without Frontiers preschool program in the Chian Kham refugee camp in Thailand, the development of "little schools" and teacher training programs in Mozambique, and the development of a preschool program with health and community action components in rural Brazil. Newsletters, occasional papers, seminar reports, books, videos, and publications in Portuguese and Spanish are announced. (RH)

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The Challenge
Early Childhood Care and Education: an agenda for action

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About the Bernard van Leer Foundation

The Bernard van Leer Foundation, which bears the name of its founder, is an international, philanthropic and professional institution based in The Netherlands. The Foundation's income is derived from the Van Leer Group of Companies, a worldwide industrial enterprise of which the Foundation is the principal beneficiary. Created in 1949 for broad humanitarian purposes, the Foundation concentrates on the development of low-cost, community-based initiatives in early childhood care and education for socially and culturally disadvantaged children from birth to eight years of age.

The Foundation provides financial support and professional guidance to governmental, academic and voluntary bodies setting up projects to enable disadvantaged children to benefit fully from educational and social development opportunities. The Foundation currently supports approximately 100 major projects in some 40 developing and industrialised countries. The dissemination, adaptation and replication of successful project outcomes are crucial to the Foundation's work.

Grants are not made to individuals nor for general support to organisations. The Foundation does not provide study, research or travel grants. No grants are made in response to general appeals. In accordance with its statutes, the Foundation gives preference to countries in which the Van Leer Group of Companies is established. Projects are currently supported in the following countries:

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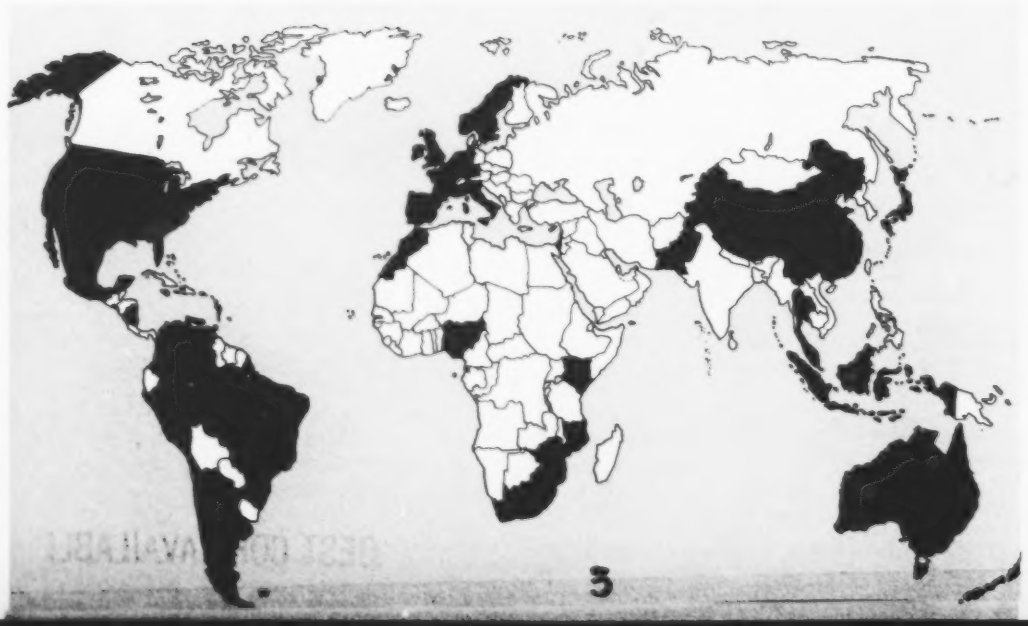

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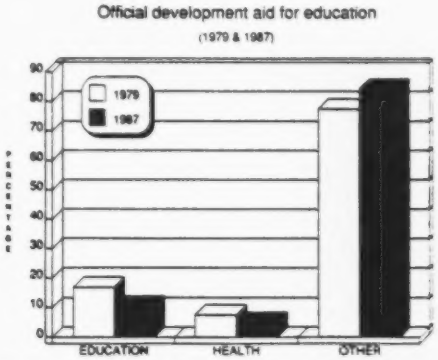
The challenge of early childhood care and education: an agenda for action

Education has long been seen as the key to open new doors for children in disadvantaged settings. In many countries national expenditure on formal education continues at a high level yet the proportion of the national budget devoted to education has been shrinking in recent years.[1] Between 1972 and 1985 government spending on education in developing countries has dropped from 13 to 10 per cent of national budgets.[2] Expenditure per pupil is also falling. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the amount spent per pupil dropped from $33 in 1980 to $15 in 1986.[3]

At the same time, official development aid for education – always a small part of total aid – has been declining. In 1979, some 17 per cent of aid was for education; by 1987, the percentage was just 10.5.[4]

A crisis in education

Efforts therefore are needed to mobilise new resources for education. Yet at the same time, a critical examination is needed of existing educational provision. The overall problem is not that children do not have schools to go to. UNICEF notes that more than 90 per cent of children in developing countries still start school,[5] although for the first time in nearly three decades, the number of children of primary school age who are not attending school is on the increase. (See graph on page 4) However, many children who go to these facilities do not do well. In at least 36 countries of the world, less than half the children who start primary school actually complete it.[6] An annual average of 12.4 per cent of children in primary schools repeat their year in a selection of 107 countries.[7] In Asia in the early 1980s, approximately 10 per cent of primary school children repeated a year, while another 10 per cent dropped out of primary education each year.[8] In



Source: UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 1990, p.59*

Madagascar, a recent survey found that less than 4 out of every 10 students actually progressed from the last grade of primary school to secondary school; nearly 3 out of every 10 dropped out of school at this point without a primary school certificate, while the remainder repeated the year.[9] Overall, four out of every 10 children in developing countries who start primary school in 1990 are expected to have dropped out before completing primary school[10] – a tragic waste of human potential.

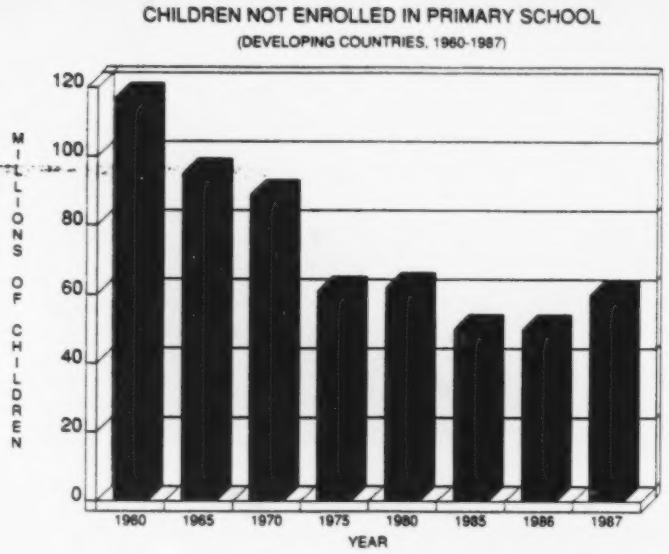
If Education for All is to become a reality, new approaches are needed. As the World Bank points out, a fundamental problem is that the limited resources currently available are badly used.[12] Too

The benefits of early childhood care and education in Colombia

For more than 10 years, the *Centro Internacional de Desarrollo Humano* (CINDE) operated the 'Promesa' programme in the Chocó Region of the Pacific Coast of Colombia. Chocó is remote, inaccessible, with few roads, few services and major problems relating to children's survival and development. The objective was the healthy development of young children. There were few schools and there was little point in trying to mobilise scarce resources to create them. Instead, Promesa sought to work through families, first to enable them to understand more about the development of young children, that is, that children do not merely develop by accident; and second, that there were concrete ways in which, even in such an arduous environment, families could influence this development process for the better.

The involvement of the community enabled families to take on new

educational roles through parents' improved understanding of child development and what they could do to influence it through locally-made learning materials. The same parents also developed a wider understanding of the other factors in children's development, particularly in the areas of health and hygiene, and how these could be changed beneficially. Recent evaluation results have shown that children who have had early exposure to developmental stimuli delivered by parents alone perform equally as well as a matched group of children in regular day care in a neighbouring region.[11]



Source: UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 1990, p.9*

little goes to cheap and relatively cost-effective services. One of the areas clearly identified as needing more resource allocation is the primary school level, where the World Bank estimates that in many countries, 'the average dollar invested in primary education returns twice as much as one invested in higher education'.[13] But is primary school already too late to start work on Basic Education? Research shows increasingly that the time to start is during the early years of a child's life.[14]

Why the early years? A young child's mental and physical development is at its optimum in the early years. The basis of language is laid at this time. Attitudes and social relations are shaped. In Piagetian terms, this is the 'age of discovery' when the mind is at its most pliable, most receptive. It represents the optimum time for preventive work, which can save a lifetime of costly remedial efforts. Indeed, a 20-year follow-up study of pre-school children in the USA found that they demonstrated less delinquency, a lower school drop-out rate or need for remedial teaching or special education, they found work sooner and were less dependant on state aid than a control group. The researchers calculated that for every dollar originally invested in pre-school education $4.75 is being earned.[15]

Social rate of return

Following on from the World Bank's calculation that the social rate of return on investment in primary school is at least double that for university education, Bristol University's Dr Walter Barker argues that the social return on early childhood care and education programmes could be nearly three times that for university education.[16] An increasing number of case studies back up this assertion.[17] The Madagascar study mentioned earlier concluded that 'for the battle against educational wastage in primary schools to be effective, efforts should be made to expand pre-school services', particularly in the rural areas.[18]

Yet in terms of national education budgets, in most countries a tiny proportion (if anything at all) is

Nigeria: community involvement

In Nigeria, a UNICEF comprehensive rural development programme includes an early childhood component (supported by the Foundation) in five areas which depends heavily on community involvement. Margaret Akinware, who works in the programme, explains.

Our programme is aimed at all the people who look after pre-school children because we discovered in Oyo that 46 per cent of the children are looked after by grandmothers while their parents are working. Also a large proportion is taken care of by older siblings as young as nine or ten. We also found that in 18 per cent of cases where the mother was working, the father would look after the children.

One important aspect is health education, letting the mothers know how they themselves can measure the health and nutritional status of their children, which we found were rather low. At the same time, adult literacy classes will be introduced in order to improve the low educational level of women in the area.

When we started the programme we found that the fathers came forward, were willing to lead classes and teach the children. And the women seemed to be happy to take a secondary role. Through encouraging the women to develop their understanding and skills, we want them to also feel that they can help teach.

We are trying to revive the lost cultures. In many villages, the parents and grandparents consider what they can contribute as old-fashioned and they allow the educated young children to take over the story-telling roles.

We need to make the grandmothers, fathers and mothers appreciate that they have a lot to contribute to the education of their children. And what we try to tell them is that there must be a continuity between the old culture and the new one. They shouldn't allow such a gap between what they know and what their children know.

When we were setting up the programme, we went to the villages

to make a list of traditional songs, lullabies, riddles and games. Quite a number of parents had forgotten and they could not tell us. We had to rely on the Institute of African Studies which had a collection of Yoruba songs and stories which we are using.

Community ownership in Kenya

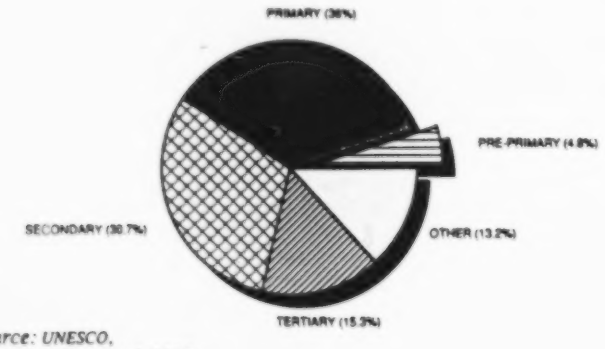
Today, more than half of Kenya is covered by a national pre-school programme, yet the Kenya Government's investment in early childhood education is relatively small. This state of affairs has been achieved by a very gradual process of working with community groups and local government organisations. This was initially achieved by a 'project' working in four areas of the country. Now there is a national programme offering training and support to a network of district level centres which, in turn, work directly with local sponsoring organisations. The organisations are prime examples of community mobilisation. This means (in the Kenya context) a local community group in the form of a committee which pledges itself to construct with its own resources and labour a small school made of local materials, to recruit at its expense young women to run the school and be trained as teachers, in some instances to provide a daily school lunch for the children. The intervening body, in this case the National Centre for Early Childhood Education, purely provides training for local supervisors as well as offering back-up to what is essentially the work of the mobilised community. It provides materials, research services, encouragement, brokerage with the authorities. In the Kenya case, the responsibility for the programme rests in the hands of the community. They are the owners of it and are identified fully with it. Its continuation is secure, given that its form is one which the community can accept and which financially is within its means.[19]

spent on pre-primary education. A survey of more than 50 countries found that an average of less than five per cent of the national education budget (excluding capital expenditure) was devoted to the pre-primary sector. (See below.)

One reason for this may well be that the usual provision at pre-school level is the establishment of some type of institutional facility, staffed by trained professionals. As with primary education, attempting to institute such a programme on a national level can be an expensive proposition, often far beyond the capacity of educational budgets. Clearly, an alternative approach is needed.

GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SPENDING, BY LEVEL

(57 COUNTRIES, 1985-1986)



Source: UNESCO, Statistical Yearbook 1988

Parents as prime educators

The key to a new approach is the link between the parent and the young child, building on the desire of parents to do the best for their children and the fact that early childhood offers a unique opportunity for the parent to work with the child. The healthy development of young children can best be achieved by fortifying families in their task as the children's prime educators.

How can parents be involved? A rich variety of forms of good quality early child care and education have emerged in many countries in which parents are involved – family centres, playgroups, small-scale crèches, home-based programmes, child to child programmes. One of the key factors which has emerged from studies which have looked at different approaches is that children appear to benefit equally well from institutional pre-schools and those more oriented towards an informal, parent-based approach.[20] Or, as Osborn and Millbank put it:

> Provided the child receives proper care, has interesting activities and other children to play with (common features of the majority of pre-school institutions), the actual type of pre-school experience matters very little.[21]

'Early childhood education is vital in all dimensions of the child's development. It does not only facilitate the child's cognitive dimension but also facilitates physical, social, emotional and aesthetic dimensions. It is also obvious that there is an optimum period when these skills can be acquired, and that such a period is during early childhood years. Given this evidence, it is evident that early childhood education must be given greater attention as a priority in the education of the child than has been the case in the past.'
– Barnabas Otaala, *Alternative approaches to daycare in Africa: integration of health and early childhood education*, September 1989

Thus, these informal approaches demonstrate that the foundations of Basic Education can be laid in the home, the family and the community in a low-cost yet effective manner, respecting peoples' different cultures and lifestyles. As Bronfenbrenner points out:[22] 'the *informal education* that takes place in the family is not merely a pleasant prelude but a powerful prerequisite for success in *formal education* from the primary grades onward.'

By emphasising the special role that parents have as the child's first educator, these approaches build on the principle that educating children means educating adults. So in these programmes parents also learn. They learn about what it means to be a parent. But most importantly, parents learn that they matter! And that they can change their lives and those of their children.

Involving the community

Another key factor in shaping children's educational and social development is an appreciation of what is offered by the community in which they live. Where communities have themselves begun to develop even the most elementary child care or pre-school systems, the barrier between school and community is broken down, the transition of children into primary school is eased and children do better when they get there.

When people are motivated to tackle their own problems, they produce effective solutions. Solutions that are rooted in the local community, make use of local resources, come under their own control, are affordable, and which can be sustained.

Community action around early childhood can become a powerful tool for community mobilisation and self-help. Community development ceases to be a vague goal, with many diffuse objectives. Instead it becomes a targeted process, starting with young children's needs for early childhood development but ending with addressing the whole notion of a 'community of learners', of people developing in themselves the capacity to take charge of their lives and those of their children.

'Pre-school offers the educational system and the society that funds it a way to allocate educational funds that is economically efficient as well as equitable. Even without counting the inherent benefits to the children and their families from increased school success, we may judge pre-school to be a sound social policy investment on the basis of its effects on educational costs alone.'
– Changed Lives: The Effects of the Perry Pre-school Program on Youths Through Age 19, 1984

An example of this is the early childhood programme in Chocó, Colombia (see box on page 3) which led to the local population organising itself in local community associations, selecting local women for training as early childhood workers and extension agents, organising the male population around production activities, setting in motion a campaign for environmental hygiene, purifying the

Arab Communities in Israel

The Trust of Programs for Early Childhood, Family and Community Education Ltd. was established in 1984 in order to improve, develop and create services for the Arab community. It has been operating an early childhood and community project in four Arab communities in Israel since early 1985. There have been many achievements, most notably in the provision of early childhood services; the raising of parents' awareness to the needs of their young children and their attitudes towards them; the involvement of many mothers and some fathers in activities; the training of nursery teachers and para-professionals; the growth of community schools which involve many age groups; and increased understanding of the needs of the community by official agencies and community organisations.

The four areas where the programme has been operating were chosen as being representative of the types of communities inhabited by the Arab population in Israel.

The involvement of parents is a major objective. In all four areas, parents have attended special meetings to prepare them for their children's entry to the kindergartens which are part of the official education system. Classes have been organised, mainly for mothers, on subjects suggested by participants, including literacy in Arabic, Hebrew and English, sewing, home economics, health, child rearing and child development, social and religious issues.

The programme has received recognition from official bodies at local, regional and national level, with many of the early childhood provisions set up by the Trust being taken over by the authorities. This has disadvantages as well as advantages. While official recognition indicates a heightened awareness of the needs of the Arab population and means official funding, it can also lead to a lack of coherence over the programme as a whole, with different services being responsible to different authorities.

A major achievement has been the training and upgrading of both professionals and para-professionals. The latter has entailed the identification of women within the community and the provision of training sessions for them in areas where there has been no history of such activities. On the professional side, the Trust has reached agreement with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for the first ever Arabic-language advanced course for the training of professionals in early childhood and community development.

Tradition and religion play a large role in the lives of the communities participating in the programme, and it is only because all the planning and implementation are carried out with sensitivity and understanding and the involvement of the participants that so much has been accomplished.

Publications & videos
Publicaciones & videos
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Bernard van Leer Foundation
February 1990

Newsletter
The Foundation Newsletter reports on the work of Foundation-supported projects throughout the world and provides information on issues related to early childhood care and education. Published four times a year (January, April, July and October) in English. Copies of most back issues are available on request. ISSN 0921-5840

The work of the Bernard van Leer Foundation
An introductory leaflet about the aims and work of the Foundation. Published 1989 in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch.

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Beyond Child Survival: towards a new future, Report of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, 1986-1987
The second biennial report of the Bernard van Leer Foundation covers activities during the years 1986 and 1987. The report includes feature articles on projects in Mozambique, Singapore, Ireland, Italy, Trinidad and Colombia as well as summaries of work undertaken during the period in 40 developing and industrialised countries. Published 1988 in English. ISSN 0921-5921

O trabalho da Fundação Bernard van Leer

Alternatives in Early Childhood Care and Education, Report of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, 1984-1985
The Foundation's first biennial report provides a succinct account of the Foundation's work during 1984 and 1985. The 80 page report includes feature articles on six projects in Kenya, Malaysia, Israel, The Netherlands, Sweden and Peru. Published 1986 in English.

Current Programme
Contains brief descriptions of 93 major projects being supported by the Foundation in 36 developing and industrialised countries. Key statistical data on population and early childhood education for each country are included. Published 1989 in English and Spanish. ISSN 0921-5948.

Paths to Empowerment,
Ruth Paz
A study of ten years of involvement by the Foundation in community education projects in Israel, including both theory and practical illustrations. To be published in 1990

The Power to Change,
Andrew Chetley
This book describes how a project which was originally focused on pre-school children in one village has grown to affect the lives of communities throughout the Costa Atlántica region of Colombia. To be published in 1990

A Small Awakening: the work of the Bernard van Leer Foundation 1965-1986,
Hugh Philp with Andrew Chetley
Based on research undertaken by Professor Hugh Philp, the Foundation Consultant for Australasia, this publication traces the development of the Foundation through its projects and other activities over a 20 year period. From an initial focus on compensatory education, the Foundation's work has evolved, in the light of experience, to its present emphasis on the development of children in the context of their own environments. Published 1988 in English. ISBN 90-6195-015-5

Publicações em Português página 2

Publicaciones en español página 2

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

Early Childhood Care and Education: the Challenge, Walter Barker (Occasional Paper No 1)
The first in a series of Occasional Papers addressing issues of major importance to policy makers, practitioners and academics concerned with meeting the educational and developmental needs of disadvantaged children. Published 1987 in English.

Meeting the Needs of Young Children: Policy Alternatives, Glen Nimnicht and Marta Arango with Lydia Hearn (Occasional Paper No 2)
The paper reviews conventional, institution-based approaches to the care and education of young children in disadvantaged societies and proposes the development of alternative, low-cost strategies which take account of family and community resources and involvement as the starting point for such programmes. Published 1987 in English.

Evaluation in Action: a case study of an under-fives centre in Scotland, Joyce Watt (Occasional Paper No 3)
The main body of this paper is the evaluation report of a Foundation-supported project in the United Kingdom. It is preceded by an examination of the issues involved in evaluation together with an explanation of the way in which this particular study was carried out. It has been published with the external evaluator in mind, but will be of interest to all those involved in the evaluation of community-oriented projects. Published 1988 in English. ISBN 90-6195-014-7

Publicações em Português

O Trabalho da Fundação Bernard van Leer
Um folheto sobre a Fundação. Publicado em 1989.

Os Pais como Primeiros Educadores: Mudando os padrões de Paternidade
Sumário do relatório e conclusões do seminário do Hemisfério Ocidental, Lima, Perú, maio de 1986. Publicado em 1987.

Sociedade Multicultural: Educação e Cuidados com a Primeira Infância
Sumário do relatório e das conclusões do seminário internacional, Granada, Espanha, junho de 1984. Publicado em 1984.

Participação dos Pais e da Comunidade na Educação da Primeira Infância
Síntese e conclusões do terceiro seminário do Hemisfério Ocidental, Cali, Colombia, março de 1979. Publicado em 1980.

Publicaciones en español

Boletín Informativo
Artículos seleccionados de Newsletters. Publicado en 1987 y 1988 y 1989 y 1990. ISSN 0921-593X

La Labor de la Fundación Bernard van Leer
Un folleto sobre la Fundación. Publicado en 1989.

Programa Actual
Consta de breves descripciones de los proyectos de mayor envergadura apoyados por la Fundación, e incluye datos estadísticos relevantes acerca de la población y la educación en la primera infancia de cada país. Publicado en 1989.

Niño y comunidad: avanzando mediante la asociación
Síntesis y Conclusiones del décimo seminario internacional celebrado en Kingston, Jamaica en noviembre 1988. Publicado en 1989.

Los Padres como Primeros Educadores: Cambios en los Patrones de Paternidad
Síntesis y Conclusiones del cuarto seminario del Hemisferio Occidental celebrado en Lima, Perú en mayo 1986. Publicado en 1986.

Sociedades Multiculturales: Educación y Atención Infantil Temprana
Síntesis y conclusiones del seminario internacional celebrado en Granada, España en junio 1984. Publicado en 1984.

Taller sobre Alternativas de Atención a la Niñez en América Latina y el Caribe
Síntesis y conclusiones del taller celebrado en Medellín, Colombia en marzo 1984. Publicado en 1984.

Aprender a Vivir: Crónica de una Innovación Educativa, Jose R Boeta 1984, Granada, Editorial Andalucía, San Vincente Ferrer 13, Granada, España. ISBN 84-85622-76-6

SEMINAR REPORTS

Children and community: progressing through partnership
Summary report and conclusions of the tenth International Seminar held in Kingston, Jamaica in November 1988. Published 1989 in English and Spanish. ISBN 90-6195-016-3

Children at the Margin: a challenge for parents, community and professionals
Summary report and conclusions of the third Eastern Hemisphere Seminar held in Newcastle, Australia in November 1987. Published 1988 in English. ISBN 90-6195-013-9

The Parent as Prime Educator: changing patterns of parenthood
Summary report and conclusions of the fourth Western Hemisphere Seminar held in Lima, Peru in May 1986. Published 1986 in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French.

Multicultural Societies: early childhood education and care
Summary report and conclusions of an International Seminar held in Granada, Spain in June 1984. Published 1984 in English, Spanish and Portuguese.

Integrated and Early Childhood Education: Preparation for Social Development
Summary report and conclusions of the second Eastern Hemisphere Seminar held in Salisbury, Zimbabwe, February/March 1981. Published 1981 in English.

Not Only the Children

An important element in the development of Kenya's pre-school education system has been the high level of community involvement. Parents in rural areas are involved in building and maintaining school buildings, they tend school gardens to grow vegetables for the children, help raise funds for teachers' salaries, and participate in the development of educational materials. Kenya's National Centre for Early Childhood Education in Nairobi, through its network of District Centres for Early Childhood Education, has been instrumental in encouraging community involvement to spread throughout the country. The video shows scenes from a few of Kenya's diverse cultures where active communities have successfully created and run their own pre-schools. The 36 minute video was made by Leo Akkermans for the Foundation and is in colour. It is available with an English-language commentary.

That Calibre of Woman

In Ireland, two Foundation-supported projects are operating home visiting programmes. Told mainly through the words of women who undertake regular monthly visits, and mothers (and a father) of young children who are visited, we hear of the worries of young mothers with their new babies and their uncertainties about 'the right thing to do'. From isolated families in the West of Ireland, to crowded housing estates in the capital, Dublin, we see the reassurance, friendship and support which is offered by the visitors. The visitors are remarkable women, all mothers from the same villages and estates as the parents they are visiting, all volunteers with no professional training. In the words of the Director of one of the projects 'Before we began, I didn't think that calibre of woman existed - but I'm very glad to say I was wrong'.

The 36 minute video, made by Leo Akkermans for the Foundation, is in colour and available with an English-language commentary.

Empowering Young Refugees

At the end of 1987 there were 20,677 refugees living in Khao I Dang camp near the Cambodian border in Thailand. The video shows the way in which care for the pre-school children is integrated with training programmes for their parents. The mothers are taught weaving and sewing, the fathers make toys and equipment. A 'printery' produces posters and books on paper and on cloth, and training courses

are run for child care workers.
The video was produced by the Department of Mass Communications, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. It is in colour with an English-language commentary and lasts 24 minutes.

A Way of Thinking

The video is based on the multicultural education project for Saami and Torne Valley Finnish children who live in northern Sweden. It traces the history of these inhabitants, who have lived in and near the Arctic circle for hundreds of generations, and the difficulties they face with the disappearance of their traditional occupations and way of life. Part of the children's education involves them closely with

the communities in which they live and the video shows them making excursions to interview people who herd the reindeer, vegetable farmers, and the people who use the nearby river for fishing and transport. The video and the project both demonstrate that cultural diversity is not a social and educational disadvantage, but instead represents a rich heritage and an educational asset - indeed, a whole way of thinking.
The 28 minute video, made by Leo Akkermans for the Foundation, is in colour and available with an English-language commentary.

Adela

Adela lives in a village in the Andahuaylas region of the Andes in Peru. The nearest town is six hours away on foot. Because Adela can read and write Spanish, the community chose her to be trained as an *animadora* for the Pronoei - the pre-school set up by the

Foundation-supported National Centre for pre-school training in Peru. The video shows Adela going about her daily life: in addition to her work at the Pronoei she cleans, cooks and does the washing for her family and still finds time to visit families of children in the Pronoei. We see the involvement of the community in the work of the Pronoei itself and in activities designed to improve the quality of life for the village as a whole. The 24 minute video, made by Jean-Michel Rodrigo, is in colour and available with English or Spanish or French commentary.

The books on this page are available through booksellers or as shown. They are not available from the Foundation.

Explorations in Early Childhood Education, John Braithwaite
1985, Victoria, The Australian Council for Educational Research, Radford House, Frederick Street, Hawthorn, Victoria 3122, Australia. A$20 plus A$3 handling charge. ISBN 0-85563-478-2

The Gifted Disadvantaged: a ten year longitudinal study of compensatory education in Israel, Moshe Smilansky & David Nevo
1979, London/New York/Paris, Gordon & Breach Inc., 50 West 23rd Street, New York, NY 10022, USA. US$ 46.25. ISBN 0-677-04400-0

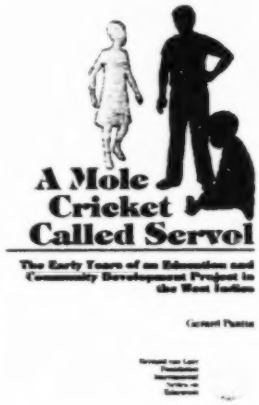
The following four books are available, price £2.50 each, from Community Education Development Centre, Briton Road, Coventry, CV2 4LF, England. Please add £0.50 per £5.00 value of order for postage, plus £1.00 per order for overseas postage.

Women and Children First: Home Link, Elizabeth Filkin (ed)
This book presents an account of the Home Link project which has been serving residents of Liverpool, England continuously since 1973. Elizabeth Filkin has edited the work of a large group of women contributors to provide an open and self-critical assessment of the programme. Ypsilanti, The High/Scope Press, 1984. ISBN 0-931114-26-8

A Mole Cricket called Servol, Gerard Pantin
In 1970 the newly independent nation of Trinidad and Tobago was rocked by a social explosion, and the effect on the traditional, easy-going way of life was catastrophic. This book describes how a Trinidadian Roman Catholic priest and a West Indian cricket player, went into the areas of poverty to try to help. Ypsilanti, The High/Scope Press, 1983. ISBN 0-931114-17-9

The Servol Village, Gerard Pantin
This book continues the story begun in **A Mole Cricket called Servol** and describes how Servol has grown from a street corner community development project to a national movement in its own right. Ypsilanti, The High/Scope Press, 1984. ISBN 0-931114-27-6

Seeking Change, Ann Short
This book describes an early childhood education project for the children of disadvantaged families in South Africa. Ypsilanti, The High/Scope Press, 1984. ISBN 0-931114-29-2



ORDERS

The publications listed on pages 1 and 2 are all available from the Bernard van Leer Foundation. They are free of charge to interested individuals and organisations.

The publications listed on this page are NOT available from the Bernard van Leer Foundation but from bookshops or suppliers as shown.

Please remember to write your name and address clearly and say how many copies you would like to receive of each publication.

The videos listed on page 3 can be made available in either the PAL system or the NTSC system on VHS or Betamax. A small charge to cover the costs of copying and postage will be made to organisations outside the Foundation network. Anyone interested in receiving a copy of any of these videos should write to the address below. Please ensure that you specify what video system you use.

Orders for publications and for videos should be sent to:

Publications and Media Unit,
Bernard van Leer Foundation,
PO Box 82334,
2508 EH The Hague,
The Netherlands

The four books below report on the outcomes of the Project on Human Potential (1979-1984) supported by the Foundation and carried out by the Graduate School of Education of Harvard University, USA. They are available through booksellers.

Frames of Mind: the theory of multiple intelligences, Howard Gardner
New York, Basic Books, 1983. ISBN 0 465 02509 9
Available in paperback edition: Paladin Books, London, 1985, £5.95. ISBN 0-586-08506-8

Of Human Potential: an essay in the philosophy of education, Israel Scheffler
Boston/London/Melbourne, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985. ISBN 0-7102-0571-6

The Cultural Transition: human experience and social transformation in the Third World and Japan, Merry I White & P Pollack (eds)
Boston/London/Melbourne, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986. ISBN 0-7102-0572-4

Human Conditions: the cultural basis of educational developments, Robert A Levine and Merry White
Boston/London/Melbourne, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986. ISBN 0-7102-0568-6

Publications & videos page 4

Combatting negative messages in the USA

FOCAL (the Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama) aims to improve the functioning of day care services for young black children in Alabama through a multi-pronged approach. This includes generating new approaches to parent education and support, building State-wide networks, raising self-esteem and skills among participants, developing culturally appropriate curricula, and training staff.

The southern State of Alabama has had a long history of brutal racial politics and oppression of black people. The black civil rights movement was, in effect, born there. In order to address itself to this, FOCAL has been intimately concerned with racism. Two years of intense lobbying and advocacy led to the reversal of the State government's decision to end its day care support programme for disadvantaged groups.

FOCAL is now concentrating on action at the community level with parents and organisations, and urging self-reliance – that the black community, no matter how poor, must recognise its own responsibility for its children. It argues that this can only come about when black people break out of the servility that has been forced on them for centuries.

The key to this is seen in what FOCAL calls 'negative racial scripting', that is, the messages absorbed by the day care workers/administrators, teachers, parents and children from white people about their role and status as black people. These irrational messages act as barriers to personal development and school attainment.

FOCAL aims to overcome negative racial scripting through its Peer Education project by creating awareness of these negative messages and by nurturing and supporting positive decisions to live differently. The process adopted by the project is basically to define the negative beliefs about self and society held by black people, to expose them as irrational, to put forward positive alternatives, and to build confidence that these are attainable.

The importance of these messages in the day care setting is that if teachers communicate negative beliefs to children, then from their earliest days, children will unconsciously absorb and respond to these. Before these children can even begin to achieve at school, parents and teachers have to replace these negative beliefs with positive socialisation.

FOCAL argues that the current norm in education is to give lip

service to the notion that parents are primary educators. 'The reality is most educators see black and poor parents as liabilities' and this is also what most black and poor parents believe.

Rather than being equal, the relationship between parents and educators is a superior/inferior one, with both parents and educators playing their respective roles.

The essential message is that it is possible to become a peer with someone else even if they hold on to beliefs that they are superior or inferior to you. You only have to believe in the following:

> I am responsible, powerful, lovable, capable and valuable (even if others don't agree); and
>
> Each other person is equally responsible, powerful, lovable, capable and valuable (even if they don't believe or reveal it in their actions).

local water supply and perhaps most crucially, successfully launching an anti-malaria campaign requiring not merely the draining of swamps but also the implantation in swamps of nematodes which attack the mosquito larvae. In the villages in which the nematode campaign was launched, the incidence of malaria, the main scourge of the local population, fell from an infection rate of over 70 per cent to around 15 per cent. All of this was in part the outcome of an early childhood programme which led to community mobilisation, requiring a very sophisticated understanding of the origins of malaria and how biological control works.

Extending coverage

Perhaps most significantly, the Chocó project is now over. The local community association, however, is still going strong and extending its influence to other villages further along the coast, itself taking on the responsibility of communicating the idea and the methodology. The Chocó people have taken over the programme and are themselves spreading its coverage.

Indeed, in recognising the importance of parent and community involvement, a world survey on early childhood care and education conducted by UNESCO points out that, in some developing countries, 'without the initiatives of parents and communities, centres for their children would probably not be put up'.[23]

Ultimately the Chocó programme, and other examples like it, are small-scale, rather intimate affairs where indeed messages can be transferred almost by word of mouth using existing social networks, family ties, trade links and so on. The issue, as always, in this connection is how the small-scale experience in community mobilisation can affect significant numbers of the population, particularly in situations of urgent human need. There are no easy answers.

Developing partnerships

Effective community development programmes demand 'not only resources but also the capacity to adapt programmes to diverse and uncertain conditions, together with a strong tradition of performance orientation that is reinforced by the demand pull of the poor themselves. Neither governments nor grassroots organisations possess this set of attributes in its entirety.'[24] There has to be partnership.

Without the partnership of parents and the community, efforts to improve early childhood care and education are unlikely to be effective, as a project in Africa demonstrates.[25] The major aim was certainly to mobilise the local community to take part in development activities in their area, including a day care centre for children from 3 to 5 years of age. However, the community development officers in charge of the project seemed unclear as to how the community was to be involved, other than by providing the food and cooking it for the children in the day care centre. There was a delay in erecting a building to house the centre, so it started in a local church with the national government providing the funds for two teachers. One mother volunteered to

cook, but the community was unable to provide the food, so the local council agreed to do so. Very few of the parents sent their children to the day care centre, largely because they did not appear to appreciate the importance of such a programme for their children's growth and development. It had been assumed by the initiators of the programme that once the centre was opened, the children would almost automatically attend. Reasons suggested for the lack of interest included a feeling that the project had been started in a hurry and prematurely. Community members were given very little time to understand the ojectives and activities of the project or to question them or offer suggestions about what they wanted. Because the community members were treated as recipients with little or no input into the project, they did not identify with it, and their participation and involvement has remained minimal.

New ways of working

Developing strong partnerships with parents and communities means a new way of working for governments, for service agencies and for educators. Yet, on the one hand governments find it difficult to adapt services to local needs. On the other the community at local level finds it difficult to exert the kind of political pressure on governments that will oblige them to bring about the kind of changes they need. It has been argued that 'the theoretical case for linkages ... is strong, (but) there is not much evidence of collaborative action between the two types of institutions in the developing world. For the most part they seem to operate on parallel tracks. ... In fact it is not unusual to find an adversarial relationship between the two, with national governments defending their "top-down" approach, and grassroots agencies wedded to the "bottom up" style of operation.'[26]

Governmental roles

Where does this leave early childhood programmes? The problem is posed in sharp form currently in New Zealand. Until recently, the New Zealand Education Department was both a policy and an executive Ministry. In the early childhood field, it supported both financially and professionally various types of early childhood programme. But the Department of Education has now become a Ministry with a purely policy role. Early childhood programmes were transferred into the hands of 'chartered' community bodies, including grassroots agencies. These may qualify for state block funding, but thereafter they are on their own. Their resources can be used to pay for teachers, advisory services, training inputs, materials. Here is a complete withdrawal by government from service provision coupled with an empowering of the grassroots agencies through funding but, other than monitoring, no other input. The new policy in New Zealand assumes that the community development process, generating strong grassroots partners, has already taken place.[27]

In Singapore, the reverse is occurring. Central government is a major provider of early childhood services competing with the private sector. Indeed various government agencies are providing services to children. Some, notably the National Trades Union Congress Child Care Services, see the provision of child care as more than custodial, indeed developmental as discussed here. The involvement of parents, grandparents, older children within the child care process is seen as adding an important qualitative dimension to the whole child care system. There is a reciprocal benefit for adults themselves, particularly as regards the development of their self-confidence and management skills. It is interesting that what NTUC Child Care Services is seeking to achieve is a large measure of adult self management of, first, services to children and, second, services to the community.

Community development in action

Here, arguably, is a community development process in action; though some would argue that its initial 'top down' approach disqualifies it from such a description. But surely the point is not where the process begins but where it ends? If, by whatever means, the end product is an adult community, 'mobilised' and 'sensitised' to the needs of children, and in control of a service working for its own community, then the community development goal has been achieved.

Even so, community involvement in day care has to be monitored and the means have to be offered, however modest, of allowing the community involvement process to evolve. The work of SERVOL, in

UK and Irish mothers make a difference

The Bristol Child Development Project operates in 24 health districts in England and Wales, and a variation of its work has been adapted for use by the Eastern Health Board in the Irish Republic. The original work in Bristol was launched experimentally in 1980 as a training programme to enable health visitors – highly trained community nurses – to acquire an insight into their work which went beyond the essential health steps that the new mother should take in her own interests and in the interests of her child. Particular attention was paid to health visitors dealing with first-time mothers. The health visitor and the mother worked very closely during monthly visits on a set of carefully determined tasks related to many aspects of the child's development. After each visit, a 'contract' was established between mother and visitor over what should occur in the interval between visits.

A detailed study shows that target families record major changes in their home environments, compared with control groups, and changes are being perceived as well in the developmental levels of the children whose mothers are involved in the programme. 'Project' children are enjoying healthier diets; they suffer less from health problems and have fewer visits to the doctor; and they enjoy a better relationship with their parents.

Even so, the UK programme depends upon the key intervening role of the professional. In other situations such professionals, exclusively concerned with community health and with infancy, simply do not exist. In Ireland, for example, the Eastern Health Board decided to try out a modified version of the programme, using the same materials but calling upon so-called 'community mothers' – women from the communities themselves – to take on the home visiting role. Indications are that there is no major difference in the quality of the programme as it affects children. Both these examples illustrate the key argument for parent involvement, that it capitalises on the mother/child relationship as a key factor in determining the future development of the child. And second, that mothers who become involved see themselves as capable of making a difference to other people's lives.[28]

Thailand: the children's house, a place where everyone feels welcome

In the Chian Kham refugee camp in the north of Thailand, the French organisation *Ecoles Sans Frontières* (ESF) is operating a pre-school programme. The largest ethnic group among the 16,000 people in the camp is the Hmong. Twenty per cent of the camp population are under six years of age. ESF has been working in the camp since August 1986 and has developed Hmong, Mien and Lao literacy programmes. There are currently about 1500 students and 82 workers and teachers involved. A French volunteer describes what it is like to set up a pre-school programme in a refugee camp.

Beginning a pre-school programme

I arrived in the camp in June 1988. It was important for me to take some time before I made a real beginning and to meet people who might help me. A refugee camp is such a special place with its special life, that it takes time before you begin to understand what is happening. In the first few days I visited the other seven agencies working in the camp and walked around observing the refugees' daily life, particularly that of the children.

I decided to call the ESF pre-school the 'children's house', because the other pre-schools in the camp were only for children from three to six and were real classrooms with benches and tables to teach English and Thai. So I began to explain that ESF would have something different for the children from birth to six years old. It would be a special area for them to express themselves, to help them to grow up, but more through games than theoretical lessons.

A common task

We asked the ESF students in the literacy classes if some of them wanted to work with the children. The most important thing for me was to help them understand that if we want to work with children we have to know about their life in the camp. I repeated many times that, alone, I couldn't do anything for these children. It was a common task: we needed each other. It was a very important point, because most of them would say: 'We know nothing, you have to teach us.'

But some answers came: 'The children play with elastics, stones, balls.' 'Children are dirty when they play on the ground.' Afterwards, we tried to see where the children were in the camp, if there were special areas the children liked. We took pictures of the children playing. We discussed adult attitudes such as letting children over three years of age play without an adult being present.

We made use of photocopies of drawings, illustrations, pictures for training. First we used very simple illustrations of child development, from a baby lying on the floor to several children ready to play together. I insisted on this notion of development as steps to reach one by one, as normal human behaviour. Later we took examples like balls or books to try to learn what a child can do according to his or her development.

I spent the first week explaining to the workers that it was important to know the children and to speak to the parents. For the first month, I wanted to see what sort of 'natural' and 'instinctive' contact they had with children, without a lot of special material. I wanted to know if they were happy with the children, because this is the beginning of everything. If you find pleasure in your work, you can improve it.

I always try to show them that we can make good educational materials with very simple things. I want them to

In this way, we began to see that we would need different kinds of educative material according to the age of the children; different balls, some easy to handle, some big and soft because the baby wanted to touch; different books: some made of cloth because the youngest want to put everything in their mouths, some with stories and with pages difficult to turn for the older ones.

Helped by some documents, the educators cut bamboo to make simple games and dolls. I also gave them illustrations about some adult attitudes in pre-school, insisting on the importance of observation to try to guess the child's expectation.

The children's house opening

By September the playroom was completed and we had a sand pit outside.

A lot of parents came to see what was happening. We had to face different problems: reception of the children, how to take care of the educational materials, equipping the playground, making a pool near the tap, and so on.

understand that the most important things will come from them. I want to take the time to let them express themselves and discover their sometimes hidden capabilities.

Children learn through play

The 'educators' have a lot to learn about the educative process. They have to know that education is everywhere, and every simple act has its importance for the children. They have to understand what 'do with the children' means, and that it is not 'do instead of or for' or 'do without'. The adults in pre-school have to really understand that children learn through play and need to feel involved in everyday life in the pre-school.

We want this pre-school to help the children to live in the camp, to grow up, develop their capabilities. We want to help the parents in their educative task which every day becomes more and more difficult in the camp. So, we will try to make a real place for the children, but first, we will try to make a place where everyone feels welcome.

Mozambique: before you can teach, first you must learn

In 1975, 95 per cent of the population of Mozambique – which totalled 12 million – were illitereate. After independence from Portugal, the country began to develop a solution to this problem, together with the implementation of a national system of education. However, war and natural disasters have interfered with, among other things, the construction of new schools. Hulene is the name of a village situated in a suburban area only 10 kilometres from the capital city, Maputo. It has 16,000 inhabitants, of which 10,000 are children of school age; however none of them attend classes simply because there are no schools.

Julião Novela is a staff member of the National Directorate for Social Action, part of the Mozambique Ministry of Health, and is a member of the project team which is working in Hulene to support the initiatives of the local people who started to set up *escolinhas* (little schools).

'The parents wanted their children to learn to read and write, it was a need of our population. That's how small groups began to be formed, where secondary students – who because of a lack of schools had to stay home – had the role of teachers.'

The Hulene project is working in two *escolinhas*, involving a total of 4,000 children, by helping to train *animadores*. 'The process of training people is not as easy as one might think. You discover more things every day that passes. We approached the young people, and of them we prefer the women, because the men only stay one year and then they leave in search of a better job, in the mines, for example. That doesn't happen with the women because they tend to stay. In any case, the courses for the *animadores* are attended equally by children, old people, young people, women.'

Portuguese become the official language in 1975; however, many parents are not literate in Portuguese and the majority of them still use their own language. One direct, concrete and immediate benefit of supporting a centre of learning is that the children introduce Portuguese in the home, they use it to talk with their parents.

At the same time there remains the need to 'preserve the past' and to study the national languages. The University has made a study of the languages and is going to begin to give the first courses in them. Also the radio has started a programme in the different languages.

Julião wanted to be a teacher because he felt the need existed to train people. 'It was my opinion that the best job was related to the education of the young child. I show other people how to learn and also learn myself, because to be a teacher you must always keep learning. Before you can teach, first you must learn. He says that a child signifies hope, something new, a continuation. 'They say that the child is the sap of the country, that children are the flowers that will never wilt. However today, because of the war, the drought, the hunger, the lack of schools, children are the ones who suffer most. We want to do everything possible so that the children are happy.'

Trinidad, addresses two related questions: not only how to provide good quality day care for the youngest children, but how to raise the coming generation of potential parents to understand, and take note of, their needs. And in particular, how to involve young *men* in the care and welfare of, often, their own offspring. We talk constantly of 'parents', when what we really mean are 'mothers'. It is time that we started addressing the issue of *fathers* and how we get *them* to accept the responsibilities of parenthood. SERVOL's vocational training includes compulsory involvement of young men in day care.[29] An important methodology is 'listening' to the needs of the local communities: addressing their local agendas. It means recognising the diversity of cultures, languages, customs and resources which make up societies, rather than imposing rigid uniformity.

An example is the story of the Jamaican Basic Schools dating from 1934; schools which have been set up, run and owned by local parents and communities and which, now, are being supported by a small central government subsidy. Basic Schools are now a national institution. But they are not a

centralised institution. Fees vary from village to village. Teachers' salaries depend on what the *local* community can afford. Buildings and programmes differ in quality. Local control and community involvement means diversity, and an inevitable fluctuation of standards.

The mobilisation of communities means diversity and it means choice. Choice, in that people who have previously had few or no opportunities for change learn that they can make decisions, and that their decisions can affect their lives. Diversity, because communities make decisions that suit their own circumstances. The role of government in these conditions becomes that of facilitator – to support and encourage rather than to impose or dictate what should be done.

The approach of community mobilisation implies a fundamental reappraisal of policy positions on the part of those who are concerned with the eradication of poverty, whether on a national or international scale. The notion that technology and practice can be transferred at will from one setting to any other setting is replaced by a perception and understanding that the primary governing factors are local and national initiatives. Community responsibility is placed at the top of the agenda instead of being merely a desirable adjunct.

If community mobilisation is indeed the way ahead for many countries in early childhood development, and indeed other areas of development, in the years ahead, we need a new professional to work confidently with such programmes. This means training – for teachers, administrators, specialists – to sensitise them to the needs of communities and ways in which they can involve parents in the education of their children.

But above all, community mobilisation sets the new agenda because it recognises that education as well as care begins in the home and within the community. That is where it has to be nurtured.

The Bernard van Leer Foundation, working through more than 100 projects in some 40 countries, is proud to have helped these communities demonstrate that people can overcome often apparently impossible odds, if only they are given the opportunities to do so.

Três Barras, Brazil: a process of mutual learning

The Universidade Federal Santa María originally had a rural extension programme operating in Três Barras in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, through which the need to introduce education became evident. In Brazil, school is compulsory from seven years of age, and in rural areas there is no programme for the development of pre-schools. So the University decided to set up a project for the rural zone which would focus on pre-school education, community action and health. As the director of the project, Professor Santa Marli Pires dos Santos explains, 'it was all a self-learning process because in this work, although other projects have a variety of materials, of experiences already carried out, we are beginners, we are pioneers.'

Training

The first question was who was going to work with the children? We opted for monitors who were from the community for two reasons. First, Três Barras is near to Santa María, but the roads are poor and there is no public transport. Another, more important, reason was that the people wanted the teacher to come from the same level, with the same characteristics, someone who understood the problems of a rural zone. But having decided to train people from the community, we met the next problem: these people had not even completed primary school and did not even know what was meant by a pre-school.

The training was developed in three steps: pre-service, in-service and periodic refresher courses. Eight candidates were selected and we put them into a classroom to start pre-service training in three phases: observation, theoretical classes and practical classes. The observation lasted 15 days and provided them with the basis for the theory, because when we talked about an activity in the pre-school, they had already seen it. Then there were 200 hours of theory and practical classes about content, not practice with the children. For example, in an art class, there was training and afterwards they painted, designed and made models. At the end of each step there was a seminar.

We have some bad habits in training. We use pedagogical terms such as 'cognitive aspects' or 'spontaneous learning' which ordinary people do not understand. Apart from being rural their community has its own characteristics because they are of Italian descent and they have certain terms which we didn't understand. That part was very interesting!

Mutual learning

It was a mutual learning process: we were learning how to train. Usually people who give training try to keep to a high level, but here it was the opposite: the lower our level, the better people understood.

After the 200 class hours, they returned to the classes where they had observed and there did 40 hours of practice. From this a new type of training commenced: in-service. The new teachers work every day with children and the project team visits them informally and positive and negative points are noted. The positive points are communicated immediately, but not the negative points. Afterwards a meeting or a seminar is arranged and the negative points are touched upon, without saying that it was in a particular class. It is talked about in a general manner. If the problem is serious and it is clear that a single meeting is not going to overcome it, then a refresher course is held.

Comparisons

It has been interesting to compare these teachers with teachers who have been trained at the university. Often the people from the community work better in the classroom. The university courses do not train people for rural work and when people from the city work there they impose their own customs, habits and values. A formal training can lead to bad habits: the way in which they learned is the way they teach others. As the person from the community learned little at school, he or she has difficulties doing courses about education, but the practice is good.

Life has changed for these teachers: they are more valued, they feel like important people in the community and want to learn more. They have asked the team to set up a library in the school so they can read more.

Helping people

First, you get in there and you listen to the people. You listen to them for periods varying from a year to three years before attempting any organised project. In fact, even when you start doing something with them, you never stop listening. You listen until you are tired of listening and then you listen some more. You listen until all the cultural arrogance has been drained from your mind and you really begin to hear the voice of the people as the important element in their own development and as far more important than the wonderful schemes and ideas that are turning around in your busy little brain.

Second, you then begin to set up tiny low-cost projects which the people have said they want. You are content with a shoe-string budget which is best covered by the economic resources of the people themselves and you resist the temptation of injecting large sums of money at this stage. Above all, each step is only taken after numerous discussions with the people, thus ensuring their involvement in both the planning and implementation of the project. This is not to say that you totally disregard your own views and your own approach; far from it. But these views, this approach, is simply one which you allow to impinge gently on the views and approaches of the community, both sides having respect for the other, both sharing in the learning process.

Third, you let the thing grow in its own way and in its own time. Sometimes it remains a small but significant project; other times, it simply leaps into prominence as an alternative educational model. Most of the time, it oscillates between these two extremes; not infrequently, it collapses. Whatever the result, there is nearly always a distinct but intangible result in terms of the total development process among the community, in which you are merely one of many influences and which stretches over a much longer period of time than your involvement with the people.[30]

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